

Literature.

De l'Art en Allemagne (Of Art in Germany, by) PARHIPPOLYTE FORTOUL.—Paris, 1842: Jules Labitte.

We were induced to examine this work, of which as yet no English translation has appeared, by the immense reputation which it has acquired, as well among the people for whose instruction it was written, as in the country the monuments and works of which it describes. The perusal of a few chapters was sufficient to assure us that in this instance extraordinary celebrity had been produced by unusual merit. Great learning, a pure and delicate taste, nice powers of criticism, an ardent fancy, eloquence of the highest order, an enthusiasm unsurpassed for art, and thorough honesty, are properties of mind which M. FORTOUL has brought to bear on the task which he has accomplished. Some detached portions of the work we had already seen in the reviews, and though they failed not to make a deep impression on our mind, it was not until we had become acquainted with the general plan of the author, and its execution, that we arrived at the full appreciation of their value, and his claims on our respect. The book professes to be composed of letters addressed to intimate friends of the writer, and such letters, it would appear, were its foundation: much, however, has since been added; the letters have become a treatise, methodical and comprehensive, not on German art only, but on art in general, considered in its history, its philosophy, its technicalities.

M. FORTOUL looks on architecture as the parent of art, as the index of a nation's sensibilities to art, as the test of its artistic powers, and their bent at any given epoch. On this theme he speaks thus:—

"Why should I address to you a panegyric on architecture, to you who have visited Italy? You have seen the genius of each of its cities written with the ineffaceable characters of stone and marble; you have seen the palaces of the merchants of Genoa and Florence, those of the patricians of Venice, those of the Roman prelates; you have seen the history of each of these great cities summed up in one single edifice: Venice, in the palace of its doges, that monument, half Oriental, half Gothic; Milan, in its cathedral, in which the art of Italy and that of Germany meet at the foot of the Alps; Pisa, in the Campo Santo, where the cloister and Holy Land still speak of the Crusaders' conquests; Florence, in that church of Santa Maria del Fiore, which Arnolfo di Lapo constructed by wedding the ogive result of the Ghibelline to the semicircular arch of the Guelph, and on which Brunelleschi raised his cupola like a pharos of the Revival; and finally Rome, where St. Peter's approximates antiquity to modern times, and unites the city of the Pagans to the city of the Popes. You have seen all this, happy that you are, and more than this! you have seen the Italians venerate the last vestiges of the great men who raised these monuments, more than we revere the memory of our dearest and most illustrious poets. Our antiquaries have not yet been able to find with certainty the house where Molière was born; but you have seen the people of Vicenza shew with pride the dwelling of Palladio. At Verona you have heard the name of San Michel pronounced in accents such as we would not utter, when speaking of the defender of his country. At Mantua, you have sought in vain the traces of Virgil; but you have found Giulio Romano honoured for having raised those temples of pleasure for the Gonzagos. At Rome you have heard the painting of Raphael compared to the architecture of Bramante."

"Yes, architecture is the parent of all arts, and therefore also the most rare, appearing at long intervals of ages, and only under conditions so rigorous as to be difficult of realization. Sculpture, painting, poetry may, up to a certain point, borrow life from caprice, and be indebted to the potent imagination of one man for an apparent splendour; but architecture, on the contrary, cannot produce anything, save by the assent of an entire people, and under the empire of one idea generally adopted. It is not until nations have reached the highest step of their development, until they have full possession of their strength, that they raise up on the soil monuments that retain for ever the traces of their passage and the marks of their civilization; thus was it that the religious temples of Greece and of the middle ages were built at the latest epochs of faith, and amidst that universal concert of minds which announces the approaching dawn of scepticism. Vitruvius was right when he said that architects ought to study philosophy with earnestness; for there is

no great structure that does not express a complete cycle of metaphysics. Paganism, does it not still breathe in the Parthenon? and under the vaults of Cologne's cathedral, does not one feel that the boundless aspirations of Christian dogma are there soaring towards heaven? As often as the forms of architecture change, so often, be assured, is civilization renewed; and if you live at an epoch of which the structures want originality, say without fear that its ideas have none. Monuments are the real handwriting of a people.

"What then is the character of that architecture which the new schools of Germany practise? Since architecture is the beginning, the abridgement of all the other arts, the answer to this question will announce the law of development in painting and sculpture."

We shall not pause to criticise this theory. One not altogether dissimilar from it is propounded by Victor Hugo in his *Notre-Dame de Paris*. The writer shews most distinctly in his work the positive subordination of modern painting and sculpture in Germany to the law that governs and animates architecture, and traces, if we may be allowed such an image, the generation of the former by the latter. So far, therefore, the theory has a practical value. We come, then, to his description of architecture:—

"Lutherans of the North, Catholics of the South, all the Germans of our day agree in this, that no one of the known forms of art can of itself satisfy them. At the same time the creation of the new forms, that should suffice for new wants, does not seem to tempt their ambition. In no other country would it be possible to meet with that variety of systems and luxury of reminiscences which are to be found in the constructions of the capital of Bavaria.

"The modern art of Germany is essentially historical. Erudition is one of the principal characteristics of this nation. Born in the universities of Italy, it was brought into France by the Scaligers; but since the seventeenth century it has found in Germany the most patient intelligences, and there it has established its principal seat. It is erudition, combined with Catholicism, that has produced all the monuments which are now in the progress of erection at Munich. Animated by the political and religious passions of Bavaria, it has contrived to realize a living and almost complete history of architecture. It will interest you, I think, to make with me a pilgrimage through the streets of this city, when all the forms with which modern art has clothed the different parts of Europe will pass in succession before your eyes. In France, it seems to be agreed that art consists above all in invention; but this great principle, which not infrequently encourages ignorance, neither preserves from monotony nor from bad taste. In Bavaria art is practised as if men had made up their minds that it resided in the memory. But in exhibiting more of knowledge than of genius, the architects of that country furnish a curious field for the study of critics, and prepare a new epoch, in which, according to the ordinary law, and under the restrictions imposed by the peculiar character of each people, the transfigured forms of anterior epochs will mingle and become incorporate."

The writer then, in a succession of chapters, describes the Latin basilica, the Greek basilica, and the specimens that belong to the Italian middle age, to the Teutonic middle age, and to the period of the Revival. He commences with

THE LATIN BASILICA.

"The basilica of St. Boniface, which is at the entrance of the Maximilian suburb, opposite the Glyptothek, is the last edifice to which hand has been put in Munich. It was founded in 1835, and the entire completion was fixed for the year 1842. M. Ziebland, who has been charged with the construction, was born at Ratisbon in the year 1800. He is a distinguished man, and has lately returned from Italy, where he travelled at the expense of the King, for the special purpose of studying the architecture of basilicas. At the moment at which I write, the monument which he is erecting has not received the whole of its exterior coating; nothing has been done to the interior, beyond placing in it sixty-four columns of granite, covered with white marble from the Tyrol at the base and the top, which divide the edifice into five naves. Though the most recent of the churches of Munich, it is that one of which the forms are the most ancient, bringing us back, indeed, to the very commencement of Christianity.

"When the Christians issued forth from the catacombs and were permitted to enjoy the light of heaven, they sought on earth for edifices in which they might adore their God. They were too ignorant of art—their dogma itself was not as yet impressed profoundly enough on their minds,—to in-

vent an architectural form congenial with their faith. Still they would not place their tabernacle in a Pagan sanctuary. Besides that it was repugnant to them to assimilate their worship to polytheism, they could not accommodate themselves to these narrow temples, in which the Greeks and the Romans concealed the unworthy impostures of their sacrifices and their oracles; they had neither idols nor jugglers to veil from the eyes of the crowd. Their object, on the contrary, was to collect at the bleeding feet of Him crucified the whole multitude of the faithful whom his passion had made a people of brothers; they sought that one of all the ancient monuments which might best suit their religion; they chose the basilica.

"The basilica was a change, a tribunal, a vast place in which the affairs of commerce and those of justice were carried on. At one time business and law proceedings had been carried on in the public forum; but they were driven from an asylum which liberty had rendered strong and formidable; they were put under the shelter of lofty structures, in which nothing could recall to the degenerate Romans the traditions of the ancient republic. A large precinct for solemn affairs that were discussed aloud; at the back part a hemicycle for the judges, or the privileged spoilers of the public fortune; all around, accessory galleries, sometimes accompanied by the *plebs*, enclosures aloft for concealing persons who wished to debate in secret their particular interests; above all this, carpentry placed nakedly on the walls, and inclining on each side, so that the lateral naves became less elevated in proportion to their distance from the central axis of the edifice; such was the plan of the Roman basilicas. Palladio has traced the design of them after the text of Vitruvius, and excavations made at Pompeii have demonstrated the exactness of Vicentino's conjectures. The Christians drove the merchants from their temple; and established themselves in their place. The hemicycle became the choir, the galleries the naves; and thus was found the form of the first churches.

"It was after this plan that Constant founded at Rome, in the fourth century, the famous basilica of St. Paul *extra muros*, that precious monument of earliest Christian art, which was almost completely destroyed by fire in the year 1825.† In this construction, however, two remarkable alterations on the design of the ancient basilicas were made. Instead of carrying on the lateral naves to the apsis, they were separated from it by a double transverse nave, which formed with a principal nave the figure of a cross. Whatever may have been the cause of this change, it was thenceforward universally adopted, and became a necessary datum of Christian churches. Another alteration, not less important, is the introduction of arches, which were substituted for the architraves which united the columns that supported the different naves. The semicircle, which succeeded the right lines of Greek architecture, underwent an alteration in the course of time, and engendered in its turn a new order of architecture. But centuries march slowly, and it was only by passing through Byzantine architecture that the Gothic was reached.

"The basilica of St. Boniface at Munich is imitated from the Basilica of St. Paul *extra muros*; but whether it was that M. Ziebland intended expressly to approach nearer to the purity of the ancient basilicas by suppressing the additions to them which Christianity made, or that he was with regret compelled to sacrifice them to restrictions imposed by his budget or his site, he has not given to his temple the posterior and symbolic form of the cross. For the rest, although the edifice is not vast, its proportions appear to me to be combined in a fashion that will produce the effect of real grandeur."

We propose to give the author's account of the other buildings at Munich in a future number.

NEW PARISH CHURCH, LEVEN.—The first stone of this church was laid on Thursday last, by R. Bethell, Esq., lord of the manor of Leven. On the silver trowel were these words—"Presented to Richard Bethell, Esq., on the occasion of his laying the first stone of the new parish church of Leven, by George Wray, M.A., rector of Leven, A.D. 1843." On the brass plate was the following inscription:—"This first stone of the new parish church of Leven, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, was laid July 11, A.D. 1843.—Richard Bethell, Esq., lord of the manor of Leven; George Wray, M.A., rector of Leven; R. Dennis Chantrell, of Leeds, architect."—The church is to be built by private subscription; Mr. Bethell gave the site, above an acre of ground, and 500l.

* The writer, it must be confessed, treats the triple ceiling of the basilica somewhat superficially.

† There is now exhibiting at the Diorama a view of the interior of this basilica as it appeared before and after the fire.